

Impact of Europeanization on the European Union's Effort to Balance Biotechnology-Related Risk and Trade Interests

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Abstract

The issue of how to regulate and govern GMOs at the EC/EU level has been troublesome since it first appeared in the 1980s. There are several reasons why this has been the case, related to the multi-level nature of the EC/EU; this nature of issue, which cuts across several policy domains; its economic and industrial importance; and uncertainties related to the novel organisms involved. Since the 1980s, the EU has been struggling to arrive at solutions by establishing a new regulatory framework along three lines: specific GMO-legislation, the precautionary principle, and the creation of the European Food Safety Agency. The framework reflects important policy changes and the impact of Europeanization. European institutions regulating biotechnology are faced with the fact that issues related to GMOs are by no means considered purely technical. EU policy and lawmakers are challenged by difficulties associated with responding to public concerns about the risks of biotechnology in ways not confined to narrowly defined economic considerations.

Key Words: Europeanization, GM food, risk assessment, precautionary principle, GMO-free zone